



**MEDSCHOOLCOACH**  
helping you achieve your medical school dreams

# Guide to the Medical School Interview



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what to do, what not to do,  
and how to ace your interview



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## Welcome from the MedSchoolCoach Team

Dear Applicant,

Take a deep breath, you have made it this far and that is a big accomplishment! If you get over this last hump, can you imagine? You're in! Whether this is your first interview or you have gone through a few already, feel confident that at least you are on the right track.

The interview is the last, but most important step in your admissions process. If you have gotten this far, the school is impressed by your application and in most ways, you meet their academic requirements. Now, you need to prove to the admissions committee you are a normal, likeable human being – after all, that is what your patients want in their doctor. You want to present your best self, be as prepared as you can, and make sure at the end of the interview that the school feels like they *have* to have you.

This short book will guide you through some of the steps needed to ace your interviews. There are of course many variations and techniques on interviewing, but we hope this will serve as a starting point for your growth as an interviewee. Follow the points in this book and you will be on your way to finishing the one last step before getting into medical school.

Best of luck,

Brian Wu - MD/PhD Candidate & MedSchoolCoach Advisor  
Sahil Mehta MD - MedSchoolCoach Founder & Advisor



## **Chapter 1: How is the Interview Used by Medical School Admission Committees?**

The interview is just one part of your entire medical school application. However, if you have made it this far then that means the school feels your GPA, MCAT, extracurricular activities, letters of recommendation, and personal statement are strong enough for you to get into the school. Basically, it means you have a foot in the door. Your interview will either have you walking through that door, or it being closed on you. The interview is your chance to shine and let the school feel like they would make a big mistake not accepting you.

### **Their chance to get to know you, your chance to shine**

The interview is your chance to shine. While the general number for acceptance rate varies, if you imagine that only 25% of applicants can get an interview (i.e. 250 out of 1000), you are already in the top 25% of the all applicants. However, your battle does not end there. You most likely have to be in the top 50% (i.e. 125 out of 250) to get an acceptance to the medical school (not included wait list positions). Therefore, your goal is to appear better than half of your fellow interviewees. These numbers vary from school to school, but the idea remains the same. A poor interview can result in a quick rejection from a medical school, a mediocre interview



can result in a middle waitlist position while an excellent interview can get you a quick invitation to the medical school. Which group do you want to be in?

One other additional point is that if two applicants with the same exact numbers come in for an interview and one has an excellent interview and the other does not, it is an easy decision for the school to decide which student to accept.

The interview is the best way for the school to find students who will fit in with their criteria. Furthermore, it's a great way to quickly weed out students that only look good on paper.

### Summary

- The interview is the most important part of the entire process! It will determine if you get accepted or rejected, so prepare yourself.



## Chapter 2: Goals for the Interview

Armed with information about how the interview is used by the admissions committee, we can now look at what the specific goals of the interview should be. These may sound similar to the personal statement goals but the approach towards achieving them will be different.

### Sell Yourself

Your main goal should always be kept in mind whenever you are answering questions during the interview. You want to make sure that you are always portraying to the interviewer that you will be a vital, hardworking, diverse, unique incoming student that will go on to accomplish accolades in your future profession as a physician. However, you have to be doing this in a way that makes you seem humble and eager to work with others. Even more, the best way to describe all these things is through stories and “showing” your true personality during the interview. Sound difficult? Well that’s what practice is for.

### Tell Them Why You Want To Go Into Medicine

Often the first question and one that will most likely come up during interviews is the question about “why you want to be a doctor?” Even though it’s been written about in personal statements, that you have spent 4+ years working towards this goal, you still need to provide a convincing, personal story that persuades the interviewer that you know exactly



what you are getting into and that you still want to do medicine.

## **Make it a Conversation**

The best interviews are the one that don't feel forced—they feel like a conversation between an old friend you are catching up with. While it may be difficult to get to this point, with practice and preparation, it should be easy to get to providing answers and make a conversation flow and seem natural.

## **Be Memorable**

This is perhaps the hardest part of the entire interview. A lot of medical students are generic. They have volunteered in hospitals, shadow doctors, done a little bit of research and in general are good people. However in order to separate yourself you really need to make your interview memorable. The easiest way to do this is to have a pleasant and fun conversation with your interviewer. If you talk the entire time about your interviewer's favorite sports team or their hobby of photography which you share that makes a better interview than talking solely about the time you pushed a patient around in a stretcher at the hospital. Remember faculty members and students on the admissions committee want to be your advocate and the easiest way to get them there is to get along with them well.



## Be Normal

This cannot be stressed enough. If you are a naturally a person who is easy to have a conversation with, the interview will go really well for you. This is actually a point we like to stress because it means that if you can relax a little bit, if you consider yourself a normal person. That said, read on to make sure you make no mistakes.

## Be Yourself

You should always be yourself above all else. Unless you are not normal, in which case, please, just act normal.



Building Blocks of a  
Great Interview

- Sell yourself
- Be memorable
  - Be normal
  - Make it a conversation
- Be yourself



## Chapter 3: What Makes a Bad Interview?

Now we know that the interview is a necessary and important last step in the application process, so what makes a good interview? Each person will have a different way of approaching this question but there are general tips that you can use to help you stand out. Before we discuss the tips though, we will discuss what some pitfalls are and how to avoid them.

Here is a quick medicine lesson for all the pre-meds out there. Sometimes tests or drugs are absolutely contraindicated, meaning if a patient has condition X, then you never give them drug 1 (a patient has a head bleed, you never start them on heparin). Sometimes, things are relatively contraindicated, meaning that a patient has condition Y, you probably should not start them on drug 2, but you can do it if you absolutely need to. We can think of the interview similarly. There are a few absolute contraindications in the interview – these are things you should not do during your interview at all costs. If any of these end up in your interview, you will likely automatically be rejected. There are also a few relative contraindications – these are things you should try your hardest to avoid unless they serve a specific point in your interview. Finally, there are some points that are trite; applicants have made them for years and admissions committees are bored of hearing about



them. You will want to try to avoid these as well. The table below summarizes these points.

#### Absolute Contraindications

- Being arrogant
- Not being prepared to answer questions about anything you listed in your application (especially research)
- Making up stories
- Being rude, impolite or unprofessional to ANYONE you come across (from the secretary to the Dean, it's all being watched!)

#### Relative Contraindications

- Listing your honors and awards
- Being the same as everyone else—answers such as “want to help people, make a difference, etc”

#### Try to Avoid

- Bad eye contact and body language
- Being long winded and not letting the interviewer get a word in
- Bringing up irrelevant details
- Having memorized, scripted answers sound like you rehearsed them.



## Chapter 4: What Makes a Good Interview?

A lot of what goes into making a great personal statement applies for the interview. We will go over some of these points and others that will help set you up for a good interview. There are many other factors too but these will help to establish that you are well prepared and a worthy candidate.

### A Great Personality Combined with Great Stories

You want your personality to shine during the interview. It is best to show off your best traits during your answers by showing enthusiasm, sincerity, and well-thought out answers. When you are describing stories that

relate to the questions, you want to show that you really were passionate about those events. Furthermore, you should be able to answer any follow up questions because you were being sincere about the story to begin with. Lastly, the answers that are well prepared and thought out are often the ones that can demonstrate this style the best.

Show the interviewer interesting conversations

- **Question:** Why do you want to be a doctor?
- **Boring:** I grew up interested in medicine and shadowed doctors and knew that I wanted to help people
- **Interesting:** I actually saved a woman's life once...



Of course any of your stories will need to have been a personal experience that you could provide all the details for. Furthermore, you want your answer to be directly related to the question and to be a powerful and convincing answer.

Again, the interview should be focused on you and why you are a great candidate for their school.

## **A Great Introduction**

One of the major differences between interviews and the personal statement is how much your first impression will count towards the interview. In this regards, you want to be professional both in dress and demeanor. Furthermore, you want to make sure that you have a firm handshake and to smile when meeting the interviewer.

## **A Great Finale**

At the end of the interview, you will often get asked “Do you have any other questions?” This is your chance to have the school sell themselves to you. If you have done your job and sold yourself, it will only be even more convincing for the school to feel like they have to have you select their school over all the others you applied to. Your question should be designed to address a specific aspect about the school that you like and would want more information on. It could range from how students interact together, how small groups function in the setting of learning, what students feel could be improved about the school, etc? You want to show you



are well researched in the school and that they need to prove to you that they are the school for you (even if you knew that already).

Furthermore, at the end of the interview you want your interviewer to be an advocate for you. They will be playing an important role in your admission and you want them to have a favorable impression of you. If you feel comfortable, ask for a business card or contact information so you can send a hand-written thank you card. If that is not feasible, an email works also. Do your best to keep in touch with them because they can help notify you of where you may be on the wait list or what you can do to improve your chances of getting in the school.



## Chapter 5: The Specifics of Your Interview Day

### Agenda

Your interview day will typically be structured as listed here.

Remember, each school has a slightly different format to their days, but in general they are more similar than different.

### Types of Interviews

#### *MMI*

The MMI (multiple mini interviews) format is covered in Chapter 7.

#### *Open File*

This is the most popular type of interview where the interviewer has your whole AMCAS application, including grades and MCAT scores.

#### Typical Interview Agenda

- **Night Before: 7:00 p.m. Applicant Dinner**
- **Interview Day**
- **7:30-7:45 a.m. Check in at Admissions Office**  
During check-in, you will receive a complete agenda and enjoy a light breakfast.
- **8:00 a.m. Welcome by the Dean**
  - Usually a talk highlighting the medical schools curriculum, students, hospitals, etc.
- **9:00 - 12:00 p.m. Interviews!**
  - Two to Three 30 minute interviews
  - Down time in between to mingle, meet students, etc
- **12:00 - 2:00 p.m. Applicant Lunch**
  - A chance to sit down and eat lunch with current medical students behind closed doors and ask all the questions you want
- **2:00 - 3:30 p.m. Campus Tour**
  - Walk around the campus and hospital with a current medical student.
- **3:30 p.m. - Done!**



### *Blinded to Grades*

This type of interview is where the interviewer has your AMCAS application (including your personal statement, activities, secondary and LOR) but does not have your grades or MCAT scores.

### *Closed File*

No application material will be available to the interviewer. This means you'll have to divulge your activities and other information to him or her.

### *Group*

This could mean two or more people in a panel interviewing you at once. It could also mean that you will be interviewing with other candidates.

Be sure to prepare for all types of interviews. Usually, the school tells you the format it will use beforehand. If they don't tell you anything, assume it's a traditional, open file interview.

## **Types of Interviewers**

Your interview can be conducted by various people affiliate with the university. Always realize your audience when interviewing.



### *Faculty*

The most common type of interviewer is the faculty member who is a practicing physician, but also sits on the admission committees.

### *Admissions Committee Member (non doctor)*

Schools often have non-physicians on their committees. Be sure you realize who you are talking to. Situations which have made people cringe would include telling an registered nurse (RN) who sits on the committee that you would never do nursing because you want to actually care for a patient (yes, it has happened).

### *Student*

Do not overlook the student interview. This is a huge component of admissions. Medical schools want to know you can get along with your peers.

## **Interview Length**

Most interviews will last between 20 and 40 minutes although there will be extreme cases in both ways. Your goal however, is to make the interview last as long as you can without it interfering with the rest of your day. The longer you can speak with the interviewer, the more it seems that you will have formed a strong connection with the interviewer.



## Miscellaneous Things about the Day

Be sure to be nice to everyone you see. This includes the secretary, other interviewers and students. However, do not be a “brown nose.” Baking cookies for the secretary will get you noticed in the wrong way!



## Chapter 6: The MMI Interview

The multiple mini interview format was developed in Canada and has now become widely accepted in the United States. Typically the interview consists of up to 10 timed stations through which the applicants rotate and play various roles. At each station the applicant is given a task or question that is not necessarily related to medicine. It can be as vague as "the person in this room is your new neighbor. Please start the conversation."

The reason the multiple mini interview format was introduced and has become accepted by multiple schools is that there have been several studies correlating performance on the MMI interview and performance as a medical student. While the traditional process allows an applicant to interact with one to three interviewers, the MMI format allows a more standardized approach to evaluating interviewees. Since each interviewee will go through the same scenarios, and the same questions, they can be graded on a more standardized scale. From a recent New York Times article highlighting MMI:

*One-on-one interviews are offered but provide poor assessments of a candidate's social skills because they reflect only one person's view, often focus on academic issues and elicit practiced responses to canned questions like "Why do you want to become a doctor?"*



The MMI approach hopes to better assess the skills you will need as a physician.

Typical scenarios can range from ethical questions about patients, health policy questions, interactions with an actor, more standard interview questions or even a task requiring teamwork. These tasks and stations are meant in some ways to simulate what you will face in real life as a physician.

In order to prepare for and MMI interview, it is important to review potential questions and scenarios. Although the scenarios may not be the same ones you find on interview day understanding the types of questions that are asked will be very helpful to you. Make sure to read about policy and current events, just like you have to do for the traditional interviews.

A recent New York Times article recapped the situation you will face on interview day well:

*At Virginia Tech Carilion, 26 candidates showed up on a Saturday in March and stood with their backs to the doors of 26 small rooms. When a bell sounded, the applicants spun around and read a sheet of paper taped to the door that described an ethical conundrum. Two minutes later, the bell sounded again and the applicants charged into the small rooms and found an interviewer waiting. A chorus of cheerful greetings rang out, and the doors shut. The candidates had eight minutes to discuss that room's*



*situation. Then they moved to the next room, the next surprise conundrum and the next interviewer, who scored each applicant with a number and sometimes a brief note.*

One of the most important things to remember about the MMI interview is that the tips and tricks that you learned for regular interview prep apply here as well. Make sure to be a normal, likable human being no matter the situation. Do not get frazzled or upset and stick with what you know.



## Chapter 7: Interview Day Attire

### Interview Attire Guidelines for Men

- Suit: A two piece matched suit is always the best and safest choice.
- Conservative colors / fabric: Navy, dark gray are safe.
- Other color trends may come and go; avoid the extremes.
- Cost / quality: You are not expected to be able to afford the same clothing as a corporate CEO. Do invest in quality that will look appropriate during your first two or three years in medical school. One good quality suit is sufficient for all you medical school interview (and maybe even residency ones) if that is all your budget allows. You can vary your shirt/tie/accessories.
- Details: Everything should be clean and well pressed. Carefully inspect clothes for tags, dangling threads, etc.
- Don't combine a suit jacket with pants that don't match.
- Ties: Tie styles come and go. Select good quality silk ties. Avoid fashion extremes, like character ties, in interviews. Don't wear a tie with a stethoscope on it!
- Facial hair: If worn, should be well-groomed. Women, don't do it.
- Jewelry: Wear a conservative watch. If you choose to wear other jewelry, be conservative. Removing earrings is safest. For conservative industries, don't wear earrings. Observe other men in your industry to see what is acceptable.



## Interview Attire for Women

- Don't confuse club attire with business attire. If you would wear it to a club, you probably shouldn't wear it in a business environment.
- Suit: Wear a two-piece matched suit.
- Suit – pants / skirts: Tailored pants suits are appropriate for women. Pants suits can be an excellent choice for site visits, particularly if the visit involves getting in and out of vehicles and/or the site is (or includes) a manufacturing plant or industrial facility. If you wear pants, they should be creased and tailored, not tight or flowing.
- Skirt lengths: Much of what you see on television shows that masquerades for professional attire is actually inappropriate for a work environment. Your skirt should cover your thighs when you are seated. Showing a lot of thigh makes you look naive at best, foolish at worst. A skirt that ends at the knee when you're standing looks chic and professional. Longer skirts are professional too; just make sure they are narrow enough not to be billowing, but not so narrow that you can't climb stairs comfortably. Don't purchase a skirt or decide on a hem length until you sit in the skirt facing a mirror. That's what your interviewer will see. Ask yourself whether it will be distracting or reinforce your image as a person who looks appropriate for a business environment or gathering. High slits in skirts are not appropriate. A small back, center slit in a knee-length skirt is appropriate. On



a calf length skirt, a slit to the knee to facilitate walking and stair climbing is appropriate.

- Jewelry / accessories: Wear a conservative watch. Jewelry and scarf styles come and go. Keep your choices simple and leaning toward conservative. Avoid extremes of style and color.
- Cosmetics: Keep makeup conservative. A little is usually better than none for a polished look. Nails should be clean and well groomed. Avoid extremes of nail length and polish color. Doctors are by nature conservative people.
- Shoes: You will be walking around! Should be leather or fabric / micro fiber. Shoe styles and heel heights come and go. Choose closed-toe pumps. Regardless of what is in style, avoid extremes; no stilettos or chunky platforms. Make certain you can walk comfortably in your shoes; hobbling in uncomfortable shoes does not convey a professional appearance when walking around the hospital.
- Purse / bag: If you carry a purse, keep it small and simple. Purse color should coordinate with your shoes. You may choose to carry a small briefcase or business-like tote bag in place of a purse. Leather is the best choice for briefcases; micro fiber or fine wovens are also acceptable.

## Miscellaneous Items

- Should I carry a portfolio?
  - Most people feel weird not carrying one, only because they have nothing to hold.



There is absolutely nothing in those portfolios that you may need during an interview (your interviewee has your file beforehand). However, you might want to carry one just in case so you can jot down some notes or look busy.

- What kind of pen?
  - It does NOT have to be a Mont Blanc. Just a nice looking cheap \$2 knockoff will do just fine.



## Chapter 8: Other Tips and Tricks

### Use Your Surroundings for Clues

One of the most often asked questions is how should one start an interview. One great way is to look around the office for something you can talk about.

The moment you walk into an interview you have an opportunity to separate yourself from others. Take a look at your interviewer's office and see if you can find something that you can relate to. Perhaps its a piece of artwork, a poster of a sports team, or a picture of him or her playing golf. Whatever it is, if you have an in, use it. If you love the same sports team the interviewer does, you should bring it up. Even if you love another sports team, you should take that opportunity to comment on the poster. If you see a piece of artwork that sticks out to you, bring it up during the interview. These can be the opening lines of your interview. Talking about something personal certainly beats the "it's cold outside today" start to an interview. Look around, find visual cues and connect with the interviewer. It will go a long way!

### Research the School

Be sure to Research the school thoroughly before hand. Understand their curriculum, the extracurricular clubs and organizations available and what each school views as their strengths.



## **Know About Health Care Policy and Economics**

It is important to understand health care policy and economics, to some extent. No one expects you to be an expert on it, but if you don't know the first thing about the Affordable Health Care Act, you are going to be in trouble. Read recent NYTimes articles on health care policy! If you can at least talk intelligently about a few of the main issues today then you will certainly come across well. However, if you fumble and are oblivious to the current healthcare situation it can mean an automatic rejection.



## Chapter 9: Sample Medical School Questions and Answers

The following sample questions and answers is not meant to be something you memorize. Rather, we hope to provide you with a general framework as to one possible acceptable answer. These scratch that this not the only way to go about answering these questions. There are many possible winning formulas however, as always, preparation is key.

We would suggest that you go through each sample question and at least think about the answer you would give it asked that. You do not have to write out an answer to every question and you certainly shouldn't memorize a long block of answers, however you definitely want to have thought about answers to some of the most common questions you'll get.

### Sample Questions and Answers

#### ***Tell me about yourself?***

This is a question that is often the most popular start question. Rather than say what to do, it's important what to avoid. Don't give out your grades (saying you graduated "summa cum laude", saying you got a 38 on the MCAT, etc). These simple statements quickly lead down the wrong path! Instead, focus on your family, your upbringing, etc.



### ***Why medicine?***

This question is obviously going to be asked. Saying you want to help people is not enough. MedSchoolCoach recommends that during your medical school interview, you lay out a brief timeline of how you came to the decision you wanted to pursue medicine (don't simply say I always dreamed of it since I was little). Provide concrete examples and scenarios that have shaped you and made you choose medicine as a career.

Do not be afraid to talk candidly. If you overcame a personal tragedy, or a family member did and this truly led you to medicine, tell us about it. Don't beat around the bush, unless it is sometime very sensitive. (Beating around the bush means saying your mom suffers from a disease and you were there for her rather than saying your mom suffers from cancer). If there are things that truly lead you to choose medicine as a career, we want to know about them honestly.

### ***Where do you see yourself in 10 years?***

This old-school job interview question still pops up from time to time, and can trip up even the most confident job interviewer. We do not expect you to have your entire career mapped out, or even your specialty choice. But, it's nice to hear whether you are interested in academic medicine (say it, even if you aren't), research, teaching, etc. Certainly avoid saying you want to be a plastic surgeon doing breast implants all day in LA (doesn't come across great).



***What are your strengths and what are your weaknesses? How will you improve upon your weaknesses?***

Create an honest list of what you think are your strengths or weaknesses and then pinpoint a couple you can remember. Practice your responses so that they sound natural and you are prepared for the question.

An example of a strength would be communication skills: “ I work very well with all kinds of people, and understand that everyone has different perspectives about projects and work tasks – so when I work with others I realize that everyone comes to the table with different priorities and objectives. I keep this in mind when I communicate tasks that need to be accomplished with positive reinforcement and awareness of what others are working on.”

For the weakness, pick one that won't that is not going to disqualify you being a physician, and then follow up with – this is what really matters – the examples of what you are doing (or have done) to fix your weakness. The most important point here is to show that you learn from your mistakes and your weakness, and you are taking the corrective action to fix the situation – and stress that! For example, if the job does not require public speaking, you can say that your weakness is you are afraid of speaking in front of the public. Then tell the interviewers that you have joined a Toastmaster club or public speech course to overcome the problem. Remind them that when you identify a problem, you actively take actions to correct it, and that is how you do things.



### ***What are the current challenges in current health care and what can we do to improve it?***

This question will be asked and you need to have an answer. Read NYTimes articles, the economist, etc and understand the current health care climate and policy so that you can better answer this question on your medical school interview.

### **Additional Sample Questions**

1. What are your career plans and what led you to these decisions?
2. What do you feel is the purpose of Medical School?
3. Tell me about why you are interested in this program.
4. Describe your style of communicating and interacting with others. Give an example of a situation in which you had to utilize effective interpersonal skills.
5. Describe a situation in which you were dependable or demonstrated initiative. One in which you were not as dependable as you would have liked.
6. What experiences have you had working with diverse populations?
7. How do you handle stress?
8. From what you understand of medical school, what part of the program will be most difficult for you?
9. If you were a cookie, what cookie would you be?
10. Describe how you can effectively deal with someone in crisis.
11. What was your favorite college course and why?
12. What do you hope to gain from this experience?
13. Describe your style of communicating and interacting with



others.

14. Tell me about a time when you demonstrated initiative.
15. Tell me about a time when you faced a conflict or anger with another individual.
16. Tell me about a time when you were criticized unfairly.
17. Tell me about a time when you failed.
18. How do you handle failure?
19. Tell me about a time when you've been disappointed in a teammate or fellow group member. What happened? How did you approach the situation?
20. Describe a situation in which you have worked with a diverse group of people. What did you learn from that situation?
21. How do you handle change?
22. How do you go about making important decisions?
23. If you could start your college career all over again, what would you do differently?
24. What were your most memorable accomplishments in your college career?
25. What does the word "success" mean to you?
26. What attracted you to this program?
27. What do you do when you are not at work or school?
28. How would your teammates describe you? How would your professors describe you?
29. If we contacted your references now, what do you think they would say about you?
30. If you could change one aspect of your personality with a snap of your fingers, what would you change?
31. In what course did you get the worst grades? Why?
32. What two things would you consider your greatest



strengths?

33. What two things would you consider your greatest weaknesses?

34. What else do you want us to know about you before you leave today?

35. Who would you say has been the most influential person in the last one-hundred years?

36. Why do you want to be a doctor?

37. What do you do in your spare time?

38. What are your specific goals in medicine?

39. What stimulated your interest in medicine?

40. What do you think about HMO's and the changes taking place in medicine?

41. What schools have you applied to?

42. What do you intend to gain from a medical education?

43. What do you think about euthanasia?

44. Why do you think so many people want to be doctors?

45. Do you think a physician should tell a patient he/she has eight months to live?

46. There are 1,000 applicants as qualified as you. Why should we pick you?

47. What steps have you taken to acquaint yourself with what a physician does?

48. How would your plans differ if you knew that all physicians would be working in HMO's in the future?

49. What do you think is the most pressing issue in medicine today?

50. What will you do if you don't get into medical school?

51. What are your positive qualities and what are your shortcomings?



52. What is your relationship with your family?
53. How do you think your role as a physician fits in with your role as a member of the community?
54. Describe your personality.
55. What do you have to offer our school?
56. What are the best and worst things that have ever happened to you?
57. What do you see yourself doing in medicine 10-15 years from now?
58. Is medicine a rewarding experience? Why?
59. Would you practice in the inner city? What do you think happens to people who practice medicine there (attitude changes, etc.)?
60. If there were an accident on the highway, would you stop and help the victims, knowing that doing so might lead to a malpractice claim against you?
61. What aspects of your life's experiences do you think make you a good candidate for medical school?
62. If your best friends were asked to describe you, what would they say?
63. How do you plan to finance your medical education?
64. What is a physician's role in race relations?
65. Discuss a book that you have recently read for pleasure. Why did you select that book?
66. If you could invite four people to dinner, who would they be? Why?
67. A patient who has been in an accident needs a blood transfusion. She states that her religion does not allow them. You are the physician in charge. What will you do? Will you override her strong objection?



Why/why not?

68. If you have the choice of giving a transplant to a successful elderly member of the community or a 20-year old drug addict, how do you choose?

69. What will you do if you are not accepted to medical school this year?

70. What newspapers, journals, etc., do you read on a regular basis?

71. Why did you choose your undergraduate major?

72. What extracurricular activities were you involved in during your undergraduate major?

73. What qualities do you look for in a physician?

74. Where do we stand in your list of medical school preferences?

75. What is the most pressing health issue today?

76. What experiences have you had in community involvement that demonstrate your commitment to medicine?

77. How do you think your personal background will affect your practice?

78. What are the negative aspects of medicine from a professional standpoint?

79. Would you like academic medicine as a career?

80. How might you deal with a terminally ill patient?

81. If you want to help people, why not social work?

82. Describe any travels that you have undertaken and exposure to other cultures than your own, if any.

83. Do you prefer the idea of basic research or of working with people?

84. Have you an alternative career plan?



85. When you need counseling for personal problems, whom do you talk with?
86. Describe your childhood and present living conditions.
87. How will you keep in touch with community needs?
88. How do you handle blood and gore?
89. Tell us your opinion of this medical school's curriculum.
90. Discuss Obamacare and how you think it will affect patients
91. Do you feel that medical students receiving federal loans should spend time practicing medicine in a rural area to give society something in return?
92. What are the differences between Britain's health care delivery system and ours?
93. What is the biggest problem in the world today?
94. What is your solution to terrorism?
95. How do you feel about euthanasia?
96. What is success?
97. What do you think about American primary health care delivery (i.e., status quo, total private systems, national health insurance)?
98. If you discovered a classmate cheating, what would you do?
99. Tell me about your family. How do they feel about your decision to attend medical school?
100. What impact do you want to have on the medical profession?



## Chapter 10: Questions for the Interviewer and After Interview Etiquette (Thank You Notes)

### Questions for your Interviewer

At the end of every interview (or even at the beginning sometimes), you will be asked by your interviewer what questions you have for them. You need to show interest in a particular school and program during this part of the interview, so it is important to have some questions ready. The more school specific they are, the better. This will require researching the school online and asking students during your interview day about particular programs. **You should also have a different list of questions for faculty interviewers and for student interviewers ready.**

The following is a generic list of questions if you need to fall back on them (this list is from Association of American Medical Colleges):

1. Are there any special programs for which this medical school is noted?
2. Describe this school's curriculum in the pre-clinical and clinical years. Are there any innovations, like Problem-Based Learning?
3. Are there opportunities for students to design, conduct, and publish their own research?
4. Is there a note-taking service? If so, is it University-run or student-run?
5. Is there flexibility in the coursework (the number of



electives) and the timing of the courses (accelerating, decelerating, and time off) during the pre-clinical and clinical years?

6. How do students from this medical school perform on the National Board Examinations? How does the school assist students who do not pass?

7. How are students evaluated academically? How are clinical evaluations performed?

8. Is there a formal mechanism in place for students to evaluate their professors and attending physicians? What changes have been made recently as a result of this feedback?

9. What kind of academic, personal, financial, and career counseling is available to students? Are these services also offered to their spouses and dependents/children?

10. Is there a mentor/advisor system? Who are the advisors—faculty members, other students, or both?

11. Does this school have strengths in the type of medicine (primary versus specialized care, urban versus rural practice environment, academic medicine versus private practice) that I will want to practice?

12. How diverse is the student body? Are there support services or organizations for ethnic minorities and women?

13. Tell me about the library and extracurricular facilities (i.e., housing and athletic/recreational facilities).

14. How active is the Student Council/Government? Are there other student organizations?

15. What type of clinical sites—ambulatory, private preceptors, private hospitals, rural settings— are available or required for clerkships? Does this school allow for students



to do rotations at other institutions or internationally?

16. Is a car necessary for clinical rotations? Is parking a problem?

17. What is the current tuition and fees? Is this expected to increase yearly? If so, at what rate?

18. Are there stable levels of federal financial aid and substantial amounts of university/medical school endowment aid available to students?

19. Are there students who have an “unmet need” factor in their budget? If so, where do these students come up with the extra funds?

20. Are spouses and dependents/children covered in a student’s budget?

21. Is someone available to assist students with budgeting and financial planning?

22. Does this school provide guidance to its students, and to its graduates/alumni, on debt management?

23. What medical school committees (e.g., curriculum committee) have student representation?

24. Are students involved in (required or voluntary) community service?

## Thank You Letters

Thank you letters causes a great deal of stress among medical student applicants. The bottom line is you should send them however they do not need to be dissertations.

The best way to communicate is to send an e-mail to the people you interviewed with within 48 hours of your interview. In it you should recap why you like the school, but



more importantly remind them of something memorable that happened. If you talk about a movie that you both enjoy or a sport that you both partake in or a hobby that you share, remember to mention it in your letter.

Some admissions committee members do enjoy getting small postcards or thank you notes in the mail. You have to gauge your interviewer yourself and see if you think this is somebody who would enjoy that. Sometimes, it shows a more personal touch than an e-mail. We would recommend that you send an e-mail anyway, but follow-up with a postcard if you feel inclined to. Often, postcards get lost in hospital mail and so you don't want your interviewer to think you did not send them any kind of thank you.

Here is a quick, but incomplete, sample of something you could say:



*Dear Dr. X,*

*It was such a pleasure meeting with you last week. Thank you so much for taking the time out of your day to talk to me about the school. I really love many facets of the program. As you know I would love to come back to New York for medical school so school X is a perfect fit.*

*It was great to meet a fellow golfer! I know some great courses in the area and can't wait to start playing again. Perhaps one day we can go out for round together.*

*Thank you again and I hope to hear from the admissions committee soon.*



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## **Final Thoughts**

Relax, be yourself, answer truthfully and think of the interview as a conversation! Combine these with practice, practice, practice and you will be good to go!

Best of luck! You are almost there!

*For more information about how  
MedSchoolCoach can help you  
prepare for your medical school  
interview, please visit  
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